

THE Nexus

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The Magic of Libraries? Or The Magic of Librarians! Study finds enthusiastic librarians embedded in the community can make the difference when it comes to funding

The studies and statistics prove it: In bad economic times, libraries become more popular. Usage across the nation over this past summer was up 26 percent in some areas. Idaho is

right in line with the trend, with one library reporting figures as high as a 73-percent jump in just this past year.

But just because more people are

using the library, that doesn't necessarily mean they will pay more to use it.

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Inside this issue:

Learn what does and doesn't influence potential voters to support more library funding — **See Gates Foundation ... Page 3**

Read about the remarkable progress Idaho libraries are making with LiLI Express — **See Cooperation among Idaho libraries ... Page 5**

See how the public presentation of you and your staff can have a powerful impact — **See It's all about image ... Page 6**

Find out what is going on in other library districts, such as Boise Basin District Library and Nampa Public Library — **See Library news from around the state ... Page 7**

{ Global information, innovative services and community

A Passionate Librarian: Portneuf Library District director is selected 2008 Idaho Librarian of the Year



The Idaho Library Association announced Karen Tate-Pettinger as the state's top librarian for 2008.

Portneuf Library District Director Karen Tate Pettinger is changing the world, one library client at a time.

She finds it such a joyful experience that she admits it has become her passion.

"You get this immediate gratification when you give someone what they want, and they tell you that they are pleased," Tate-Pettinger said. "And there are so many people who are pleased, no matter how little it is that you do for them."

She added, "I like the big picture too, of seeing the possibilities, selling the change to the board, and after implementing the new service, watching the patron's reactions. In many jobs you only see one small aspect of a project but in libraries you can be part of the process from start to finish and the satisfaction you derive from repeated successes is almost addictive."

Her passion to serve stands out so much that Tate-Pettinger

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Idaho Commission for Libraries

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Mission:

The Idaho Commission
for Libraries
assists
libraries to build the capacity to
better serve their clientele.

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State Librarian

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- Sonja Hudson, grants/contracts officer
- Staci Shaw, reading programs coordinator
- Stephanie Bailey-White, reading programs coordinator
- Sue Walker, Talking Book Service consultant

LIBRARIES

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That's according to the results of a recent OCLC survey of U.S. communities of less than 200,000 residents. Ninety percent of the population served by public libraries lives in these communities. The purpose of the Gates Foundation-financed study was to determine what factors drive local funding support for public libraries. George Needham of OCLC reported on the study at the recent Idaho Library Association conference in Idaho Falls on Oct. 2 through Oct. 4.

So, who votes to support the library? And what does it take to convince voters to support the library?

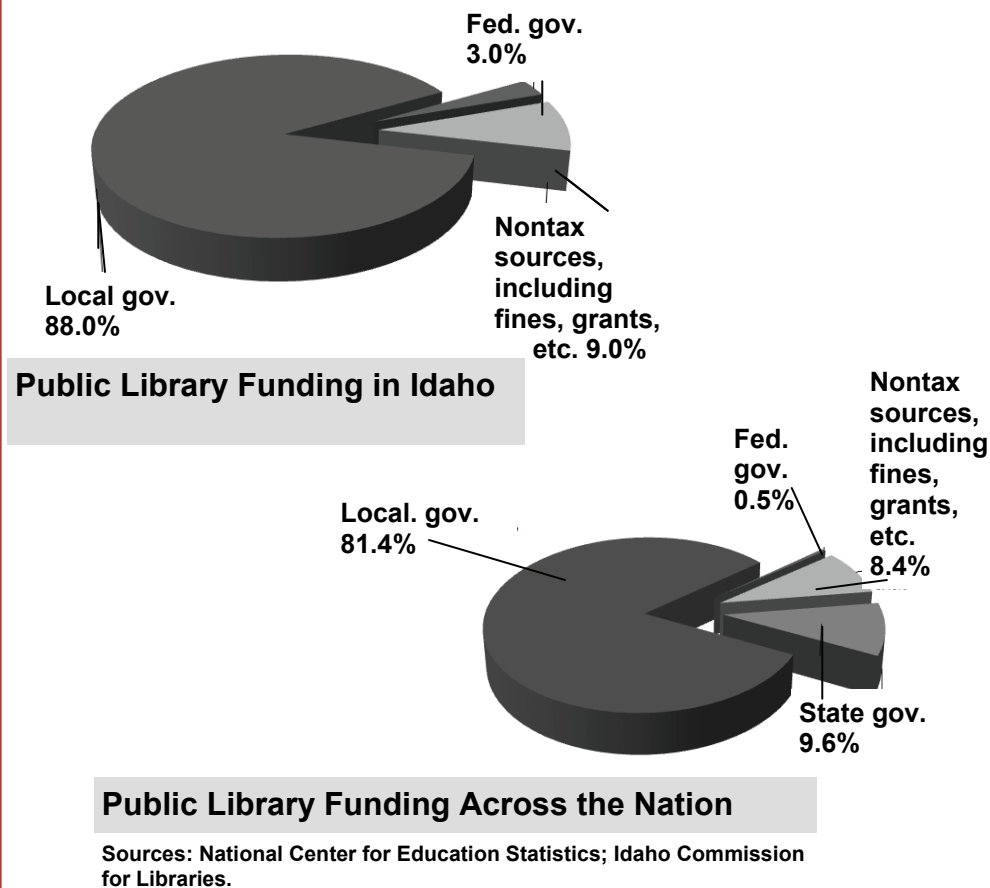
Since over 80 percent of funding for U.S. libraries comes from local tax receipts, according to the study, the answers to those questions matter. In Idaho, knowing the answers to these questions is even more important, because here libraries collect 88 percent of their funds from local taxpayers, with 9 percent coming from grants and donations and 3 percent from the federal government.

Separating the voters

"The people who are most likely to support your library in a bond issue or levy campaign are not necessarily those who visit your library, either once a year or once a week," Needham said.

These are the people who simply believe in the greater good, he said. These folks account for about 7 percent

Nationally, 81.4 percent of library funding comes from the local level; in Idaho that percentage is 88 percent. Nationally, public libraries get about 10 percent of their funding from the state, but for all intents and purposes public libraries in Idaho get no state funding.





of the population.. Often times they are well off and want everyone to have equal access to education and information.

The study showed that 26.6 percent of the general population will never vote, no matter what. Since that group doesn't vote, the 2008 OCLC study, entitled *From Awareness to Funding*, focused instead on "probable supporters," which made up 32.3 percent of likely voters, and "barriers to support," which is a group making up 34 percent of likely voters who have significant barriers to voting in favor of increased library funding. Those in the "barrier" group are categorized into three categories: financially strapped, detached or convinced they can find better information on the Web.

Waxing passionate about the library

To secure the endorsement of

probable voters and those with barriers, Needham said the study reveals that perceptions of the librarian are highly correlated to support.

Most effective is a librarian who:

- ***Advocates*** for the library
- ***Is knowledgeable*** about the community
- ***Has a commitment*** to lifelong learning
- ***Is passionate*** about making the library relevant

Idaho State Librarian Ann Joslin agrees with the findings.

"I do think that having someone – and it's usually the library director in most libraries -- who is very positive and presents an enthusiastic public face for the library makes a difference," she said. "That person

goes to the community events, whether Rotary or Christmas parades, so that people hear that name or see that face and identify it favorably with the library."

In addition, Needham said, the librarian, library staff and/or super supporters must foster the realization that the library is a **necessity** for education, for economic development, and for building community.

"Focus on meeting public demand; tie into education in the community; become part of the business community," Needham said.

Joslin said that librarians and super supporters will have to determine for themselves what their individual communities need most in order to establish support.

The Gates Foundation asked OCLC to come up with ideas about improve funding by looking at how to get more people to vote in favor of library levies, where that's an option, and how to influence policy makers who control library funding. In conducting the study, OCLC worked with Chicago-based Leo Burnett Agency, a leading advertising and marketing company proven to create appealing messages for voters.

The studies reaped **results almost opposite from the first conclusions you might reach:**

1. There is **no** correlation between frequency of library visits and willingness to increase funding for libraries.
2. Providing statistics on library use and promoting the library's role as access to information **don't** necessarily work for getting more library funding. **More important** is that supporters have to view the library as a place where they can change their lives.
3. Demographic data (age, gender, income level, etc.) are **not** significant indicators of support. Library funding behavior is driven by attitudes and beliefs.
4. Knowing about all the services the local library provides does **not** ensure a voter's support of increased funding.
5. Voter perceptions of the public librarian **do** have a strong influence on funding support. To get public support, a librarian has to be embedded in the community and viewed as a strong and positive force.
6. Although elected officials recognize the need for increased library funding, they are **rarely**, if ever, the first to push for increased funding support for libraries. Library funding is typically initiated by a passionate and committed library director, a small group of voters or by private groups, including Friends of the Library organizations.



BE PART OF IDAHO'S WEB 2.0 FUTURE

and connect to our library community from your desktop! Join library staff from around the state as we explore how to use our cool 2.0 tools.

Your Professional Brand:
Creating Profiles & Setting
Privacy Levels

- Nov. 10 10 to 11 a.m.
- Nov. 12 4 to 5 p.m.
- Nov. 13 2 to 3 p.m.

Your Professional Toolkit:
Blogging, Tagging &
Bookmarking

- Dec. 17 4 to 5 p.m.
- Dec. 18 2 to 3 p.m.
- Dec. 19 10 to 11 a.m.

Need a computer headset with mic to participate? Let us know when you register!

Sign up for one or more of these free one-hour sessions at
<http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/events>

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PASSIONATE

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emerged as this year's Idaho Librarian of the Year from six other nominees.

"We had some pretty stiff competition," said Suzy Ricks, director of the Eastern Idaho State Technical College library and also chairwoman of the ILA Scholarship and Awards Committee.

"Quantity and quality of service went into our determination," Ricks said. "Tate-Pettinger has 27 years as a library director. She was a director of two libraries. She computerized both libraries." In addition, "She loves libraries and people. She is looked upon as a passionate leader in eastern Idaho and at the state level, too, as she has been willing to work on a number of statewide committees in order to improve libraries at the local level," Ricks said.

Tate-Pettinger, a New York City transplant to rural eastern Idaho said she "fell in love with being a librarian" when she got her first job in Soda Springs in 1981. She claims she was hired solely because of her "college shelving" experience. Though she's not admitting it, her degree in English Literature from the New Rochelle College for women -- only 30 minutes from downtown Manhattan -- might have

given her an advantage at that time in the remote community.

But once she took the job, "I just couldn't believe I hadn't ever considered being a librarian," Tate Pettinger said. "I adored it and have never looked back."

By 1985, her enthusiasm began earning her invitations to participate on state committees. So far she has sat on 15.

"Here is my plug for working with the state," Tate-Pettinger said. "You work on those committees and bring what you have learned back to your local communities. The more I have gotten involved with librarianship at the state level, the more passionate I become."

Said Ricks, "Some librarians are just willing to sit in their little niches. But Karen wants to improve all libraries. She is not a stand-alone librarian. She is looked upon as a passionate leader. She wants us all on the rise."

Deflecting attention from herself, Tate-Pettinger said, "It's amazing the passion I see in the librarians in these little Idaho towns. They are committed to having that building open and doing the best they can. The big-time library stuff that has to be done they do in between dusting and story time and fixing the computers."

(For the complete list of 2008 ILA winners, check page 7.)

Just in Time Grants

Boise State University for \$40,275

Meridian School district for \$18,189

Lewiston City Library for \$13,492



Cooperation among Idaho libraries continues to grow

Every week Kimberly Librarian Helen McCord helps a Gooding library client with her book needs, even though Gooding is some 40 miles and three library districts away.

And that client didn't even have to get a Kimberly Public Library card. Instead, the book hound from Gooding has borrowing privileges in any of 64 cooperating Idaho libraries, including Kimberly and Gooding. They are all part of a reciprocal borrowing service called LiLI (Libraries Linking Idaho) Express,

"This woman works in Twin Falls, and on her lunch breaks she slips over to Kimberly (three miles away) and stocks up on books," McCord said. "This works for her because she's seldom in Gooding when the Gooding library is open."

Gina Persichini, networking consultant for the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICFL), coordinates LiLI Express.

"Unlike Interlibrary Loan, you just go get the book yourself," Persichini said. "It's faster, since you don't have to wait two or three days to get the book, and there is no borrowing fee."

She added, "For the library, there really is very little risk. What are the chances that someone from another library district is going to come in a check out all of your books? It is the rare person who takes advantage of the system."

John Hartung, director of the Hayden branch of the Kootenai-Shoshone Library District, can attest to that.

"We've been doing cooperative sharing of resources for a very long time, so joining LiLI Express wasn't



that big of deal," he said. "We are happy to do this because we think it is the way we should go."

But in addition, Hartung actually takes the idea of honoring library cards from other libraries way beyond what LiLI Express asks Idaho librarians to do. Hartung's library staff will actually accept a library card from any place in the world. Conceivably, if you are a visitor from another country or state, you may borrow from the Hayden Branch Library.

"This has never been a problem for us," Hartung said. "We have had far worse losses from local patrons. I think part of that is these guests are so grateful to use the library."

Persichini said the program, which started with 34 libraries in January of 2004, has shown strong sustained growth since its inception. Just during this past 10 months, 10 more libraries have joined. Most are in eastern Idaho.

Madison Library District Director Judy Dewey said she put out an e-mail a few months back to several librarians in the eastern-Idaho region, asking them to join LiLI Express.

She said part of her reasoning had to do with so many people in a roughly 70-mile radius of Rexburg having to travel there to shop.

"It really is so much cheaper and faster than Interlibrary Loan," Dewey said.

In just the two-and-a-half months since Madison Library District joined, Dewey said she has 77 library clients signed up.

One of the librarians from eastern Idaho who jumped on the LiLI Express is Carla Sherman, director for the Valley of the Tetons in Victor, 65 miles from Rexburg. Her motivation in joining was to better serve the vast majority of her local population that travels elsewhere to work during the day. Residents commute to Jackson Hole, Wyo., Rexburg or Idaho Falls. Sherman already had a reciprocal interstate borrowing arrangement with the library in Jackson Hole, so now LiLI Express allows her to extend her services to residents traveling the opposite direction.

Sherman hasn't marketed the program yet, but "I think once people find out we have this service, they will be using the local libraries a lot more."



IT'S ALL ABOUT IMAGE

Public perception matters

Anne Abrams

Field Notes

Out of all things important in the OCLC report, the one thing I keep coming back to is the public's perception of the librarian.

The "librarian" image is a hot topic in library land. Just do a quick Google search and you'll find blogs, articles, and conference presentations devoted to the subject. I know what you are thinking, "I don't have time to worry about what I look like! I have a job to do."

Okay, we all would like to think our natural inner beauty is enough to establish credibility, but consider the consequences of not looking professional. And I'm using the term "professional" loosely here with today's mix of dress terms for the workplace. It takes people less than 30 seconds to determine a person's social-economic status. And it doesn't matter if they are right or wrong about it: first impressions are hard to shake.

Consider this: A journalist friend of mine went to her

hometown public library to do some research for a story. She said the librarian who shuffled into the special-collections room help her was dressed in "broken-down Birkenstocks" and a "baggy shift." The librarian didn't make eye contact nor offer much help, so the reporter concluded the librarian was either afraid of her or didn't like her.

The upshot was when the reporter's editor asked her if she would be interested in covering the library director's retirement, she turned it down. When a friend of hers wanted coverage for the library fundraising campaign, she turned that down, too. And when anyone mentioned that particular library to her, she encouraged them to go elsewhere. Fortunately for this library, the reporter has moved to another city.

But the lesson to this true story is reporters are people too. And they have tremendous influence on what does and

doesn't get into your community's newspaper. To a reporter, and the public in general, any one on the library staff is the librarian. And how that library staff appears and acts can influence how the library is perceived.

One of my colleagues used to talk about appearance when prepping libraries to go out for a referendum. He counseled that librarians should be at least as well dressed as the bankers, retail owners, and other business professionals in the community. My rule of thumb, even on my most casual days, is asking myself, "could I go to the First Lady's office dressed like this?" (And now you know why it takes me so long to get ready for work!)

I understand that you don't often have to worry about seeing the First Lady, but do think about the most important person in your community who might drop by for information. How you look and the level of confidence you portray could net your library a windfall.

Newsletter gets new name and look

In case you're wondering, yes, the newsletter for the Idaho commission for Libraries has a new name and a new face. The *IFCL*

News has morphed into *The Nexus*. Newsletter Editor Julie Pence, and Anne Abrams, marketer and advocate for IFCL, collaborated on the project.

The new name comes directly from the vision statement for the ICFL: Idaho libraries are the nexus

of global information, innovative services and community, enabling us to sustain our history, empower our present, and create our future.

In the new design we have included a light bulb with the phrase "Idaho Library Community." We think the symbol speaks for itself.



Library news from around the state

Voters in the **Boise Basin Library District** spoke loud and clear Nov. 4th when 1,650 of them voted to keep their library district while only 396 voted to dissolve the district.

"We had four out of every five supporting the library," said Beth Wilson, who organized volunteers in early October to get the word out to voters to support the district. The issue landed on the ballot when Boise County resident Ann Heltsley presented Boise County commissioners with a petition of 50 people, according to *The Idaho Statesman*, who said they wanted to see the library district go away. Heltsley is the spokeswoman for a group calling itself Citizens for Reasonable Taxation.

Commissioners put the issue on the ballot as a straight yes /no vote. Dissolution of the district would have meant the entire citizenry of Boise County, rather than just the property owners in the library district, would have had to pay \$936,000 library building constructed in 2006 that would no longer serve as a library.

Heltsley has expressed discontent with the library district since 2005.

Nampa Public Library was able to bring to a close a three-year controversy about two controversial books earlier this fall. The board voted to allow *The New Joy of Sex* and *The Joy of Gay Sex* to remain on the shelves after the American Civil Liberties Union threatened a First Amendment lawsuit in federal court. The 3-2 decision came after the Nampa city attorney warned board members the case could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to pursue. In June the board had voted to keep the books in the collection but only if they were stored in the director's office. The latest decision also reversed the board's June vote to amend library policy to restrict minors' access to any library acquisitions that have graphic sexual illustrations that might meet the definition of "harmful to minors" under state law. (*Associated Press*)

Jerome Public Library hosted a display in early October of banned books through the decades in order to bring attention to the concept of government interference with

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Did you know...

- **Generation Y** young adults, ages 18-29, are the heaviest users of libraries when trying to find information to solve problems in their everyday lives.
- **Since 2000, 17 states** have conducted school library impact studies, and the results show a clear and positive link between a good school library media program and higher student achievement. Idaho is about to launch such a study.
- **Today's student will** have 10-14 jobs by the age of 38, according to U.S. Department of labor estimates.
- **The top 10 jobs** that will be in demand in 2010 didn't exist in 2004. That means we are currently preparing students for jobs that don't exist.

2008 Idaho Library Association Winners:

- 2008 ILA Scholarship: Laura Abbott from Nampa Public Library;
- 2008 Gardner Hanks Scholarship: Sarah Jackson from Idaho Falls Public Library;
- 2008 Idaho Book of the Year Award for the 2007 publication year: *At Nature's Edge* / Henry Whiting II. Salt Lake City : University of Utah Press, 2007; Honorable mention: *Five Skies* : a novel / Ron Carlson. New York : Viking, 2007;
- 2008 Friend of the Year Award: Weippe Public Library Friends of the Library Association;
- 2008 Trustee of the Year Award: Dr. Jim Tullis from Portneuf District Library.

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STATE

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people's right to read what they want. Nonetheless, *The Joy of Sex* was not included in that collection, though at one time the library had owned a copy. Staff member Tina Cherry explained, "Controversial books often seem to walk away from the library without being checked out." (*The Times-News*)

In September the Pocatello community celebrated 100 years of service provided by the **Marshall Public Library**. The Pocatello Masonic Lodge re-dedicated the building with the same ceremony their predecessors used to dedicate the library 100 years ago. Library Director Mike Doellman said that Marshall Public Library was the first library in Idaho to have a bookmobile, back in 1956. The celebration spawned a new project to begin the library's second 100 years. Community members, including Friends of the Library, kicked off a fundraiser to purchase another bookmobile. The new bookmobile is estimated to cost \$150,000. The campaign has been dubbed "Nickelmania," in keeping with the idea that during current economic downturn, community members will have to save their nickels to fund the purchase. (*Idaho State Journal*.)

Nov. 4th was also the day that some 73 percent of the 300 citizens who voted in Plummer chose to approve a \$500,000 bond for a new building for the **Plummer Public Library**. The library already had \$100,000 in the building fund (donated and fund-raised) with additional pledges. Other grants are possible because of leveraging matching funds. Twice the campaign committee went door to door with information. There were also two public meetings in which library supporters used Power Point to demonstrate successful library projects in the region and help people visualize a new facility.